Hurray! It's the Magazine's 20th Birthday!

January/February 2013

American Girl

Celebrating 20 years of fun!

americangirlmagazine.com

Reader Contest: Be on our cover!

* Throw a mix-and-match **party**
* **Frost** a cake like a pro

Quiz: Predict your friend's future

Plus! Real girls' amazing birthday stories

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Meet Saige™
GIRL OF THE YEAR® 2013

She's a spirited girl whose passions inspire action.

New!

Saige Copeland loves to draw the horses at her grandma Mimi's ranch. But she's starting fourth grade this year, which, at her school, means no art classes. Can Saige's passion for art change the world around her?

Soar WITH Saige

Learn about our sweepstakes!
See inside back cover for details.

Gallop into Saige's world through her books, doll collections, special in-store events, and online games!
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2. Paid in-county subscriptions	0	0
3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, counter sales, and other non-USPS paid distribution	39,444	37,091
4. Other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
C. Total paid distribution	441,734	429,387
D. Free distribution		
1. Outside-county stated on Form 3541	368	457
2. In-county stated on Form 3541	546	556
3. Other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
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F. Total distribution	446,121	435,857
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I. Percent paid	99.02%	98.52%

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10% post-consumer waste

Volume 21, Number 1

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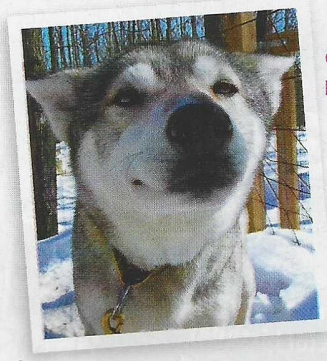

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Safety first!

Some of our projects and activities require an adult's help.

When you see this symbol, be sure to ask an adult to work with you.

Cover photo: Steven Talley

Girls EXPRESS

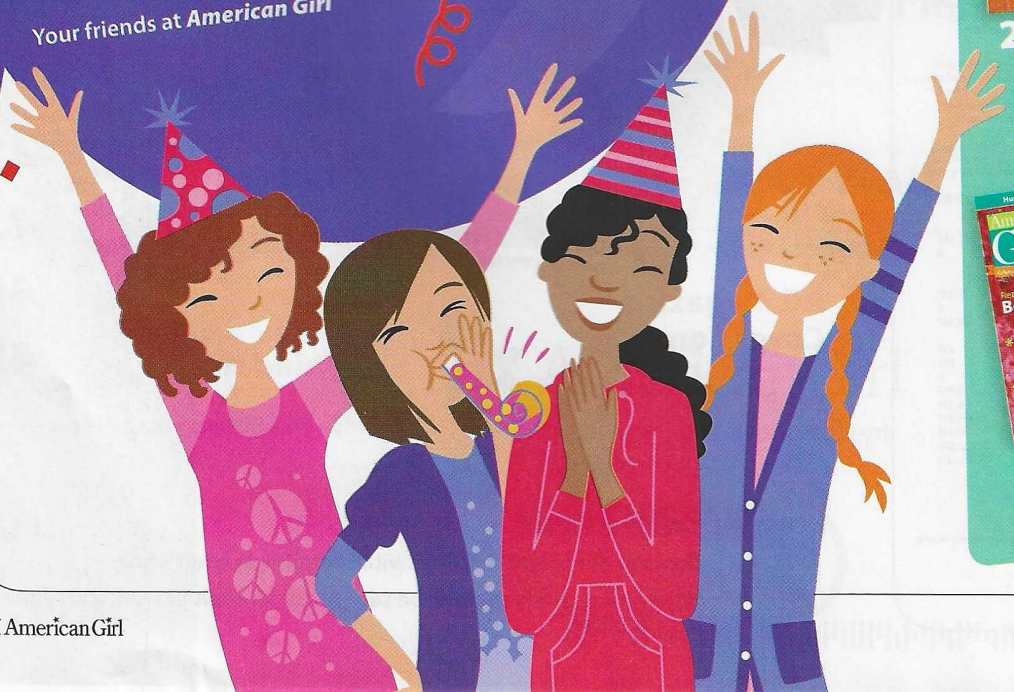
Happy Birthday, AG!

Dear Reader,

Surprise! It's ***American Girl* magazine's** 20th birthday, and we want you to celebrate with us. This issue is jam-packed with **birthday fun.** We have birthday-themed **True Stories,** readers' ideas for **birthday cakes, frosting ideas,** and a **mix-and-match party** for you to throw. Plus, we're running a **contest** that gives **YOU and a friend a chance to appear on our cover!** Turn to page 18 for details.

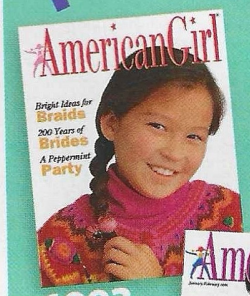
Thanks for making the last 20 years great. Our readers are what make AG so special, and we couldn't have done it without you.

Your friends at ***American Girl***

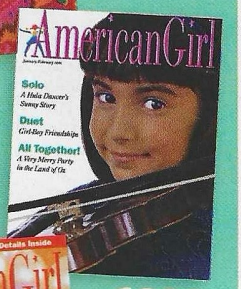


20 Years of American Girl

Look how much we've changed over the years! But a few things have stayed the same—such as the fact that we have tons of great girl readers like you.

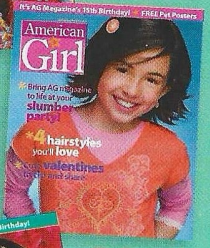


1993



1998

2003



2008

Hurray! It's the Magazine's 20th Birthday!
American Girl
Be on our cover!
Throw a mix-and-match party
Frost a cake like a pro
Quiz: Predict your friend's future

2013

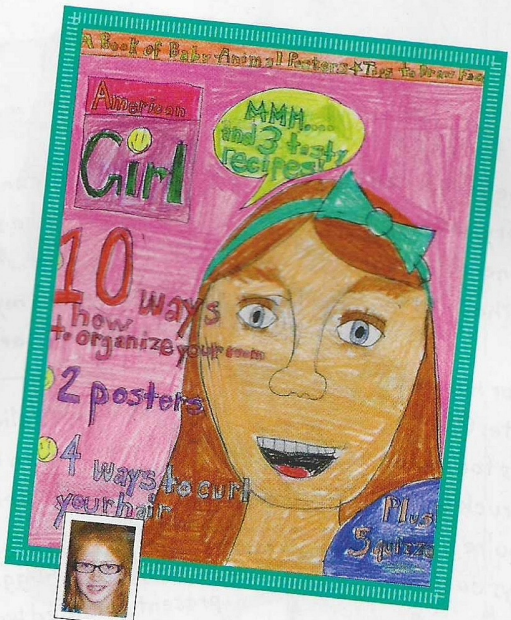
Illustrations: Tracey Wood

Help us fill our gallery! Send color copies of your **original artwork** or **photos** to the address on page 7. Sorry, we can't return entries.

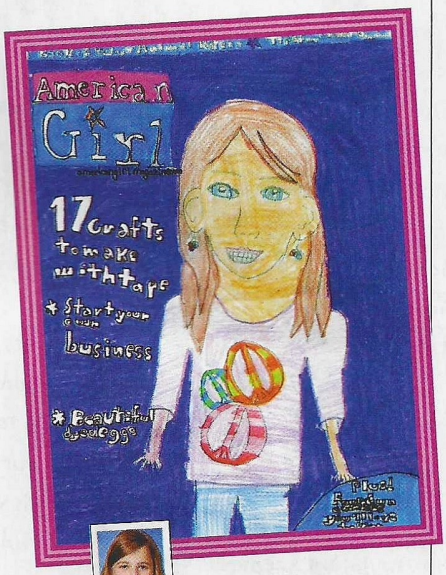
AG Art Gallery

American girls from coast to coast picture themselves on our cover!

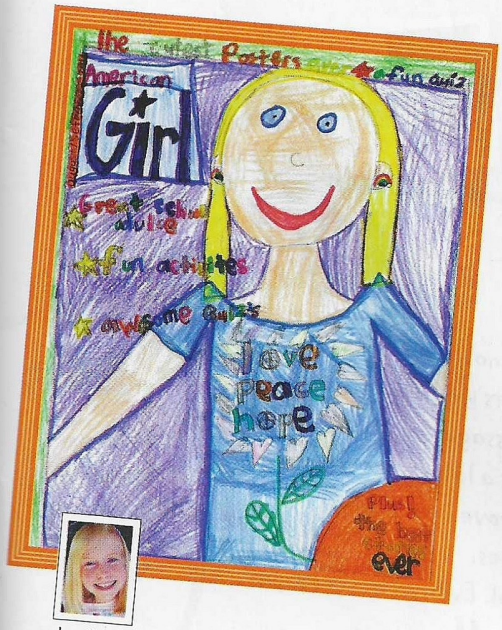
Kirsten A.
Age 11, Washington



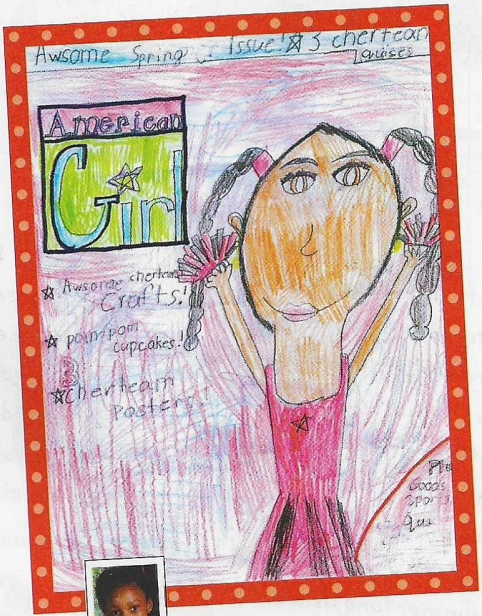
Paige H.
Age 10, Kentucky



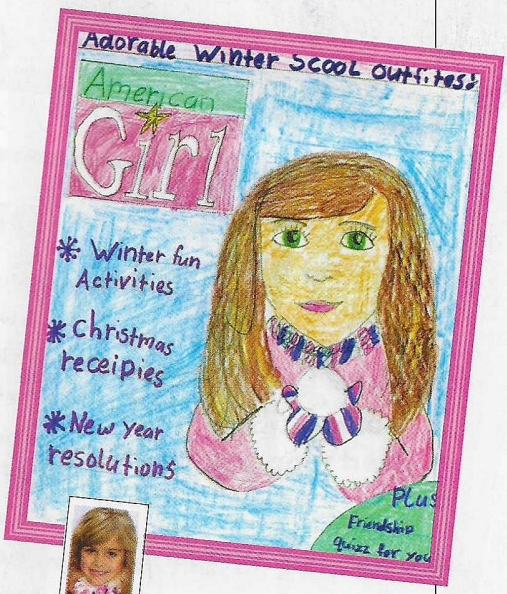
Lucie F.
Age 10, North Carolina



Lily F.
Age 9, California



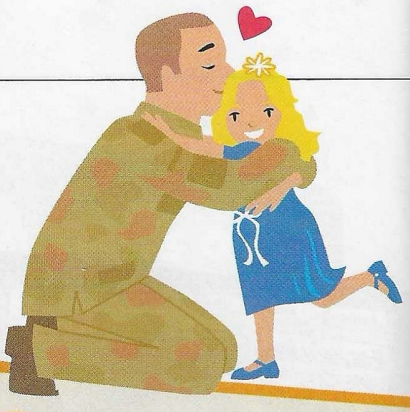
Heaven D.
Age 8, Texas



Sophia B.
Age 8, Georgia

True Birthday Stories

These American girls share their best birthday tales.



I Helped Horses

Dear American Girl,

For my 11th birthday, my friends and I had fun and at the same time we helped out. It all started when I learned about an abandoned horse named Abe. That story got me upset. Horses make me happy. How could someone be so mean to a horse? I made a plan to celebrate my birthday by helping the organization that rescued Abe.

I asked my friends to bring presents for horses instead of for me. Some brought money to donate. Others brought bales of hay and treats and toys for the horses. Afterward, my mom and I loaded our truck and delivered the donations. The way I look at it is you're a year older and it's time to celebrate, but birthdays can be about sharing and helping, too.

Sincerely,
Gabby S.
Age 11, Missouri

My Dad Came Home

Dear American Girl,

My dad is like a superhero. He's a soldier and was away for a long time. All I wanted for my 6th birthday was to have him home. On my birthday, my class celebrated with cupcakes. I also shared a poster that I had made with pictures of things I love—including ice cream and my dad.

You won't believe what happened. My daddy surprised me! I didn't even know he was home. He walked right into my classroom when I was showing my poster. I couldn't believe it was him. I cried and ran into his arms, and I couldn't stop hugging him. I told him the only birthday present I wanted was him. Having my dad home made it my best birthday ever.

Sincerely,
Baylee P.
Age 6, Utah

I Was on a Billboard

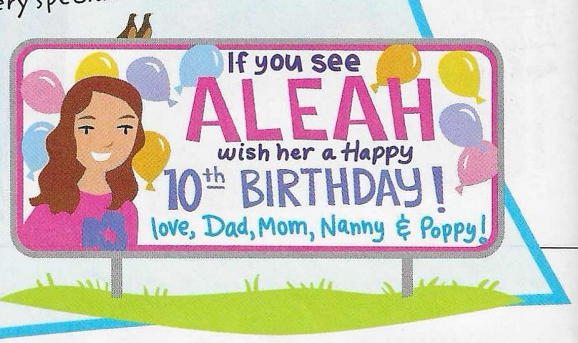
Dear American Girl,

For years, I have wanted to see my face on a billboard. I don't know why, I just love the idea of those huge pictures. I never thought my parents would go for it.

A few days before my 10th birthday, a friend sent me a message saying she had seen my billboard. What!? I could not wait to see it. It was a lot bigger than I expected—11 feet high and 23 feet wide, to be exact! We drove by it about 20 times, and it was up for a whole week. I took a lot of pictures.

Having my picture on a billboard made me feel very special. Even after the sign came down, I still love it. My friends and I used my billboard vinyl all summer long as a water slide!

Sincerely,
Aleah S.
Age 10, Pennsylvania



Just Like Magic

This is the easiest card trick EVER.
No tricks are involved—just really good acting.

1. Ask a friend to help you with a new magic trick you're working on. Give her a deck of cards, and ask her to shuffle them really well—at least 15 times.

2. Ask her to pick two cards without naming the suit of the cards. (For example, just a two and a jack, not the two of hearts or jack of spades.) She can tell you her picks. Say that you are practicing making those cards appear next to each other in the deck.

3. Take the deck from her, and pretend that you're concentrating really hard, such as by staring at the deck and touching your forehead with your fingers.

4. Fan out the cards. A two and a jack will be next to each other somewhere in the deck. Amazing!

How it works:

Actually, this trick won't work every time because it's not a trick at all. Chances are very good that any two random cards picked will appear next to each other in a well-shuffled deck. If the trick doesn't work, just say that you must need more practice, shuffle, and try again!

Creative Corner

Cool Caddy

Cut out card. Flip over for directions.

AG Poll

Answer these questions, and then turn the page to see how your answers compare to those of other AG readers.

Which topping would you put on a cupcake?

- strawberries
- marshmallows
- chocolate shavings
- jelly beans

What's your favorite thing about your best friend?

- her laugh
- her understanding
- her kindness
- her sense of humor

Cool Caddy

Cut or carefully tear the flaps off one end of a **cardboard box** big enough to hold magazines. Cover the box with **adhesive felt.** Use a **hole punch** to make handle holes, and make handles from **ribbon.** Store desk supplies, magazines, or any small items inside—instant organization!

Photos: Radlund Photography

AG Poll

What girls told us:

On a cupcake, girls would put ...

57% chocolate shavings.

18% strawberries.

14% marshmallows.

11% jelly beans.

A girl's favorite thing about her best friend is ...

41% her sense of humor.

26% her kindness.

20% her understanding.

13% her laugh.

To answer our weekly poll question, go to americangirl.com/playmagazine

Reader Recipe

Anna Grace W.
Age 11, Alabama

A PB&B Shake for AG
* 1 Big spoonful of peanut butter
* 1 scoop of vanilla ice cream
* 1 Banana
Milk
* ½ cup milk
ice cream
* Ask an adult to blend.

- glass
- straw
- ENJOY!

Shining Star

Eva N. has a colorful imagination. The New Hampshire girl loves to make notecards and illustrate them with drawings of pretty things such as green-and-blue peacocks or black-and-white penguins. When she learned about poor children in Africa who needed help, Eva used her imagination to figure out a way to pitch in.

"I came up with the idea to make cards and sell them," says Eva, age 9. Her mom helped get the word out.

Since last January, Eva has raised about $3,000, which she used to sponsor a 3-year-old girl in Zimbabwe.

"All of the money goes to her family for food and medicine," says Eva, who is still making and selling cards with hopes of sponsoring another child. "I've learned how important it is to think of others before you think of yourself. And that even I can make a great difference."

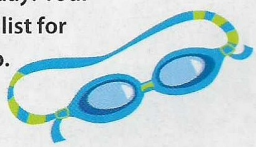
You can shine, too.
Use your own artwork to make cards to sell. Get cards produced at a print shop, and then wrap them with a pretty ribbon and a tag explaining the charitable cause your sales will benefit.

Mini Quiz

Which Chocolate Are You?

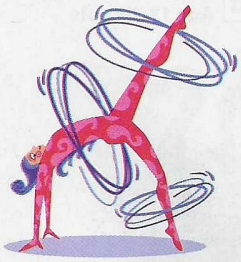
See which sweet treat matches your personality.

1. It's sports signup day! Your name goes on the list for
- **a.** gymnastics club.
- **b.** mascot squad.
- **c.** swim team.



2. It's Sunday Fun Day with your best friend! You two will probably
- **a.** paint each other's nails.
- **b.** make up a dance.
- **c.** hang out and talk.

3. It's report day in social studies class! Your project is about
- **a.** glamorous museums in France.
- **b.** acrobatic circuses in Canada.
- **c.** calm, pretty villages in Asia.



4. It's career day! You want to go to the presentation by the
- **a.** fashion designer.
- **b.** comedian.
- **c.** veterinarian.

5. It's class election day! You'll be found
- **a.** putting up handmade posters and reminding people to vote.
- **b.** planning the big loudspeaker announcement of winners.
- **c.** collecting votes and making sure things run smoothly.

Answers

Mostly a's
Chocolate Cherry

Friends say you have great style, and pretty things make you smile.

Mostly b's
Chocolate Nut

Playful and funny, you have lots of talents—and you love to show them off!

Mostly c's
Chocolate Caramel

You are easygoing and responsible—and you're loyal to friends and family.

Write to Us

Be sure to include your
- First and last name
- Address and phone number
- Birth date, including year
- School photo or other portrait
- Parent's signature

Send us a cool envelope! Print our address neatly on the front and your return address on the back.

We can't print every letter, but we read everything you send to us. Hope to hear from you soon! ★

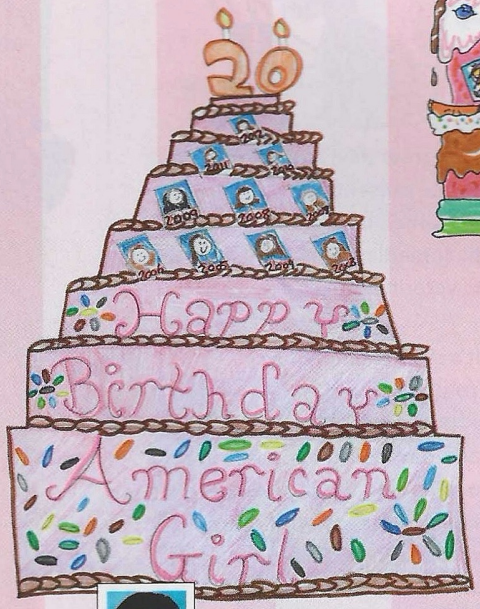
Envelope art by
Emma K.
Age 13, Tennessee

Cake Mix

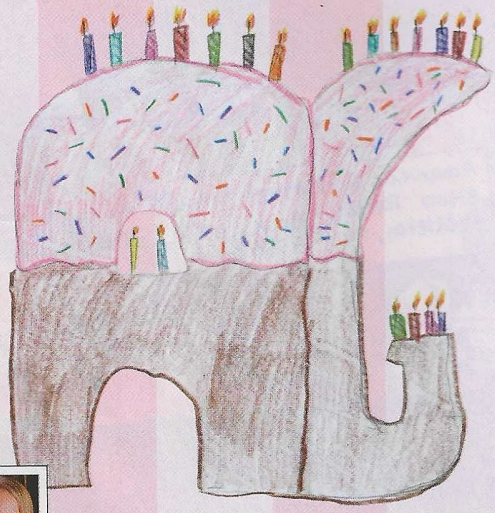
You sent us over 3,000 sweet treats—all baked with birthday wishes for AG!

Ava K.
Age 13, Illinois

Siena R.
Age 12, Pennsylvania



Emely C.
Age 10, California



Marissa B.
Age 12, California

Natalie L.
Age 11, Florida

Arianna K.
Age 10, New York

Addison D.
Age 9, Oklahoma

Olivia P.
Age 12, Georgia

Rachel H.
Age 11, South Carolina

New Contest: Crazy Hairstyles

Imagine that you're at a sleepover and you decide to have a wacky hair contest—what silly style would you create? Send a picture of yourself wearing a one-of-a-kind hairdo! No makeup, please—we want you looking your natural best. Send your photo to the address on page 7, along with your first and last name, address, and birth date. **Postmark deadline: February 8, 2013. Winners will appear in the July/August 2013 issue. Sorry, we can't return entries.** ★

Illustration: Lauren Scheuer

Birthday Bonanza

When you answered these questions, we learned a lot about your party personalities!

Have you ever had a birthday slumber party?

- **60%** said yes!
- **40%** said no

Here's where you want to have your dream party:

- Bowling alley 3%
- Giant mall 14%
- Horse stable 22%
- Water park 40%
- Fancy hotel 21%

75% of you would rather give (not get) 1,000 gifts.

Your favorite cake flavor is:

It's a tie!

- Red velvet 33%
- Chocolate 33%
- Vanilla 14%
- Lemon 13%
- Strawberry 7%

This is what you want to find in a pinata:

- MP3 players 43%
- Gold coins 29%
- Jewelry 28%

On my birthday, my parents said they were taking me to an opera. I was kind of **disappointed**, but then we ended up at a Selena Gomez concert! I was so **surprised**.

Colleen M.
Age 10, Florida

One year, I decided I didn't want tons of gifts. So I asked my party guests to bring school supplies to **donate**. It made my guests—and me—feel really **good**.

Beda V.
Age 11, Maryland

Illustrations: Paige Pooler

Coming Up Color!

Send your answers to one or more of these colorful questions.

1. Give this nail polish a name!

2. What is your favorite color?
   a. Red
   b. Orange
   c. Yellow
   d. Green
   e. Blue
   f. Purple
   g. Other (tell us what it is)

3. What color are your bedroom walls?

4. If you could dye your hair, which hue would you choose?
   a. Pink
   b. Blue
   c. Purple

5. Fill in the blanks: "When I see the color _____, it makes me feel _____."

6. If clouds could be a different color than white, what color would you like to see?

To answer, go to page 7 and follow the instructions.
Postmark deadline: February 8, 2013. Some answers will appear in the July/August 2013 issue. ★

CHILLY DOGS

WE ♡ PUPPIES

Sisters Emma and Greta love Siberian Huskies, snow, and dogsledding.

GRETA, AGE 9

Imagine whooshing down a snowy, wooded path on a sled. Snowflakes land on your face. It's quiet except for the pounding of the dogs' paws on the trail, pulling fast. The wind blows your hair. Sometimes you see a deer or a wild turkey in the woods. That's dogsledding. It makes me feel happy and thrilled and just wonderful. The dogs love it, too.

Our family includes 46 strong, playful, and beautiful Siberian Huskies. My parents run a dogsledding business.

Yes, it gets cold (I mean, really cold, here in Wisconsin), but I don't mind. Our mom keeps us warm with musher mitts that she makes. Musher mitts are big, fluffy mittens with a waterproof shell that goes all the way up to your elbows. Last year, our mom made pretty and fun red mitts with white fur cuffs. They were really warm. My sister, Emma, and I also wear parkas, snow pants, warm hats, and boots. The dogs are fluffy and warm without coats, but sometimes if the snow is icy they wear booties to protect their feet.

I competed in my first dogsledding race with a team of three dogs. At the start of the race, the dogs are lined up in the chute, ready to run and pull. They get so excited that they bark and jump. Their excitement always rubs off on me. I can't help but get excited, too. Our dogs are like that—always brightening up my day.

EMMA, AGE 12

There's nothing else in the world like dogsledding. It's all about the thrill of seeing the dogs pulling and having fun. They are so loud when we're hooking them up, barking, and howling (*Arrroooo!*) and jumping like crazy. But the instant you let them go, all is silent, and you're rushing quietly down the trail.

I started "mushing" when I was a baby. My mom would strap my car seat into the sled, and I'd nap out there. She says my first word was "dog." When I turned four, I learned to harness the dogs and drive my own dogsled, first with just one dog, then adding speed and power with two dogs, then three and four. I've been competing in our local dogsledding race since I was little.

Each year late in the summer, we start training. Instead of sleds, the dogs pull all-terrain vehicles on the trails. We condition the dogs' muscles and build their endurance while we wait for the snow.

When it does snow, I love to see all the dogs covered in a blanket of white. They love it, too. They get very excited when we switch them back to pulling sleds. My sister and I pick which dogs we want on our teams and get focused on training for the big race in February. The race course is about seven miles of trails through the woods.

"IF YOU'RE HAVING A BAD DAY, THEY'LL ALWAYS GIVE YOU A BIG LICK AND MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER."

Our dogs are so happy and friendly, and they love to run. Working with them as a team is the greatest. If you're having a bad day, they'll always give you a big lick and make you feel better. Sometimes I hook up my team just to go get my best friend so she can come over to play. Last year my sister and I learned *skijoring,* (say it: skee-JOHR-ing). That's skiing with a dog pulling you over the snow. Whether we're racing or just going for a ride in the snow for fun, I love working with dogs. Wherever we go, we have fun getting there.

SLED SPEAK

When Emma and Greta are driving a team of dogs, communication is everything. Here are some mushing commands and what they mean.

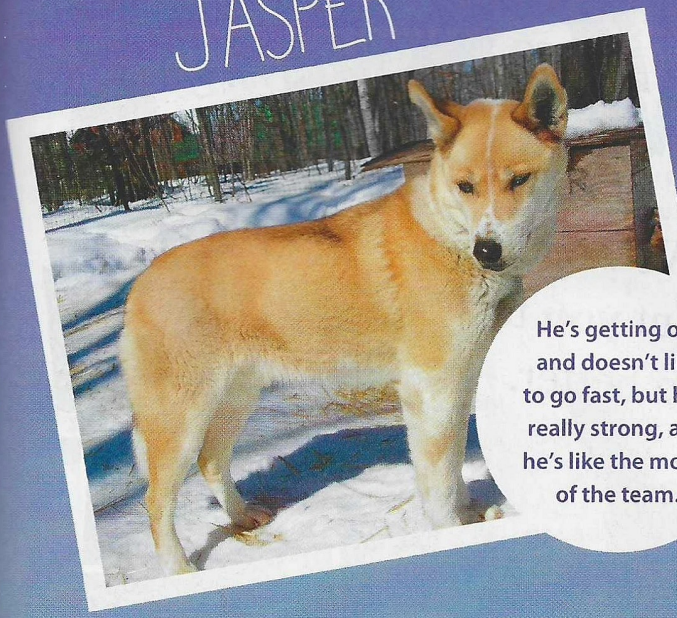
- *Mush!* (Let's go!)
- *Gee!* (Turn right!)
- *Haw!* (Turn left!)
- *Whoa!* (Stop!)
- *Easy!* (Slow down!)

MEET THE DOGS

Siberian Huskies are large, hardworking dogs that have super-thick white fur with black, reddish, or tan markings. "They are very, very happy and smart dogs," says Emma, "and they love to run and pull." With 46 Siberian Huskies to help their parents care for, Emma and Greta have plenty of chores, such as making sure the dogs have food and water. The dogs need LOTS of serious exercise every day—very long and fast runs. They're not right for every family, but they fit right in at Emma and Greta's house.

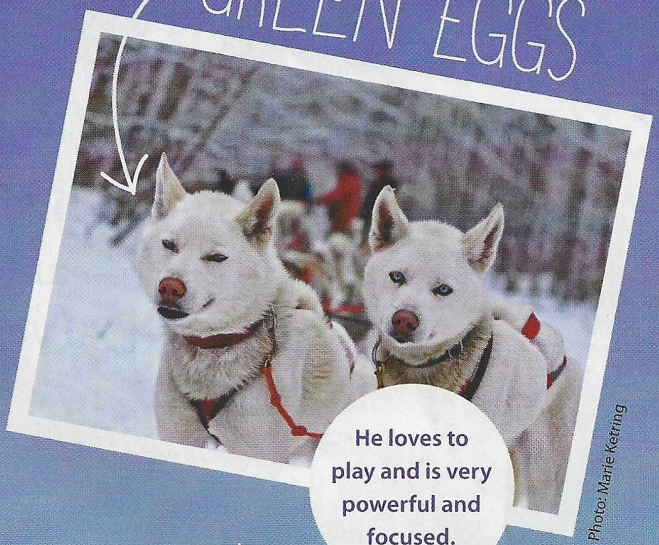
"We love all the dogs," says Greta. "Each one has a different personality." A few of the sisters' favorites are:

JASPER



He's getting old and doesn't like to go fast, but he's really strong, and he's like the motor of the team.

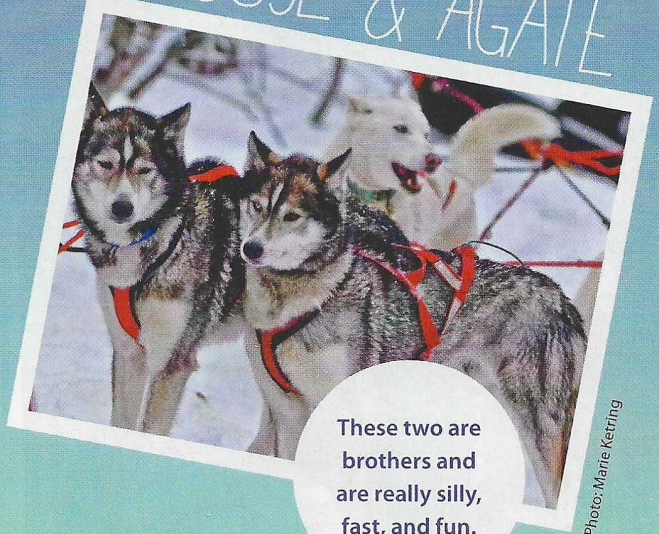
GREEN EGGS



He loves to play and is very powerful and focused.

Photo: Marie Ketring

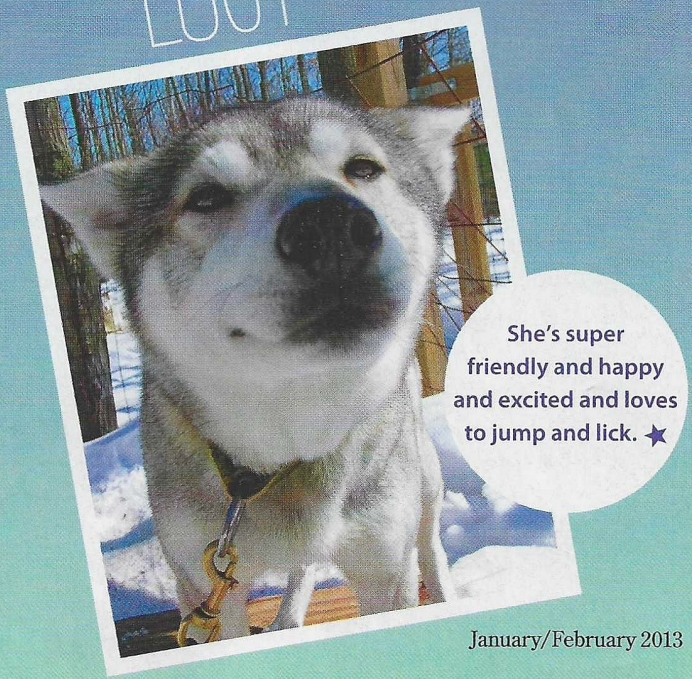
MOOSE & AGATE



These two are brothers and are really silly, fast, and fun.

Photo: Marie Ketring

LUCY



She's super friendly and happy and excited and loves to jump and lick. ★

Yay, AG! Magazine

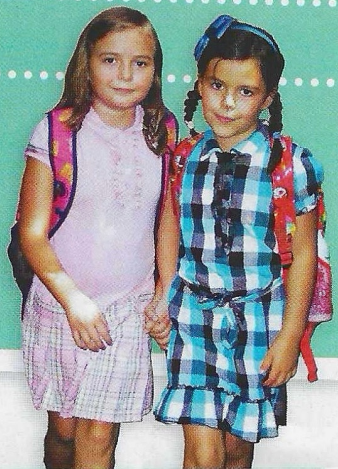
It's the magazine's **20th birthday!** We've got some surprises in store—and we want **you** to help to make our next 20 years even better.

Then and Now

Things have changed a lot since AG first came on the scene.

	1993	2013
Girls' top TV shows	*Blossom, Full House*	*Jessie, Victorious*
New words in the dictionary	e-mail, snowboard	dance-off, supervillain
Girls' hairstyles		
Girls' fashions		

Surprise! Victoria Justice (*Victorious*) and Peyton List (*Jessie*) both have appeared on our cover!



Tell us! Take a picture of you wearing your favorite outfit, and we'll use it as wardrobe inspiration in a future issue! Send your pic to the address on page 7.

Count It Up!

The five states with the most AG subscribers

1. California
2. New York
3. Texas
4. Pennsylvania
5. Ohio

The five most common names of AG subscribers

1. Emily
2. Emma
3. Hannah
4. Sarah
5. Grace

Five odd objects that we've shown on our cover—see if you can guess from this list!

Ice skates
Binoculars
Toothbrush
Lighted candle
Bowl of popcorn

Chemistry beaker
An AG magazine
Fishing pole
Apple
Violin

Bike helmet
Softball bat
Paintbrush
Bowling ball
Hockey helmet

Surprise! Each of these items has appeared on our cover at least once. You can see the violin cover on page 2!

Five cute animals that have appeared on our cover

The five most popular features we've ever done

Surprise! We'll keep this a secret for now because *American Girl* is planning a special best-of issue that will be available later this year. It will include all the stuff that readers have loved most over the last 20 years. Watch your magazine for more details.

Tell us! What do you like about our covers? What could we do better? Give us your best idea, and you just might see it on a future cover! Send your letter to the address on page 7.

Turn the page for a super-exciting contest! ★

Photos: Steven Talley, Jose Martinez Victoria Justice photo: Lisa Rose/Nickelodeon Peyton List photo: © Disney Channel/Craig Sjodin

AG Magazine Cover Contest

Friendship.

For 20 years, *American Girl* magazine has been telling stories of girl friendship. Some stories were funny. Some were sad. Some were heartwarming, surprising, or just really crazy-happy. Every friendship story was special, just like every real-life friendship is.

Think about your greatest friend. What's the story of your friendship? **You and your friend can tell your unique friendship story for a chance to be on our cover.** Follow the instructions on the entry form, have one parent of each of you sign it, and mail in the entry.

All of us here at *American Girl* will be glad to meet our new friends—**you!**

Photo: Steven Talley

American Girl 2013 Magazine Cover Contest Official Rules

NO PURCHASE OR PAYMENT OF ANY KIND IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN THIS CONTEST. MANY WILL ENTER, FEW WILL WIN. A PURCHASE WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. ENTRY OPEN ONLY TO GIRLS AGES 8–13 WHO ARE LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE 50 UNITED STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. VOID IN PUERTO RICO, ALL U.S. TERRITORIES AND POSSESSIONS, AND WHEREVER PROHIBITED BY LAW.

1. SPONSOR: The American Girl "2013 Magazine Cover Contest" ("Contest") is sponsored by American Girl Brands, LLC, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562 ("Sponsor").

2. CONTEST PERIOD: The Contest starts January 1, 2013 and ends February 28, 2013 (the "Contest Period"). All entries must be postmarked no later than February 28, 2013 and received by March 7, 2013 to be eligible for review. The Contest consists of three (3) phases. Phase 1: The American Girl Judging Panel ("Judging Panel") will do a preliminary screen of all entries for compliance with the rules and adherence to the judging criteria. Phase 2: The ten (10) top essays will be determined by the Judging Panel and sent for final review. Phase 3: One (1) Winner will be selected from the top ten (10) entries selected in Phase 2 and notified by American Girl via phone or to the mailing address provided on the entry form. Limit one (1) entry per person for the entire Contest Period. Entries, including photographs, become property of Sponsor and will not be returned. Send completed entry, essay, and photos to: *Cover Contest*, American Girl magazine, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton WI 53562. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, illegible, incomplete, misdirected, or postage-due mail/entries/requests. Each entry must be mailed in a separate outer mailing envelope.

3. ELIGIBILITY: The Contest is open to girls between the ages of eight (8) and thirteen (13) (born between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2005) with written permission from their parent or legal guardian. Parent/legal guardian and Entrant must both be legal residents of the 50 United States and District of Columbia (excluding Puerto Rico and U.S. territories and possessions) ("Entrant"). Void where prohibited by law. Employees and agents of American Girl Brands, LLC and its parent company, affiliates, and/or subsidiaries (collectively, the "Promotion Entities") are ineligible to participate.

4. HOW TO ENTER: No purchase, entry fee, payment, or proof of purchase necessary to participate. During the contest period, you may obtain an entry form in the January/February 2013 issue of *American Girl* magazine or at www.americangirlmagazine.com, where official entry forms will be available beginning January 1, 2013 at 12:00 a.m. CST through February 28, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. CST. All entries must be submitted via mail; there are no online entry opportunities in this Contest. You may also obtain an entry form by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: *American Girl Magazine 2013 Cover Contest, ENTRY FORM REQUEST*, PO Box 620497, Middleton WI 53562-0497 to receive an official entry form. Vermont residents may omit return postage. Requests for entry forms must be received by no later than February 14, 2013. The official entry form must be completed and submitted by Entrant's parent/legal guardian with a signature plus the signatures of the Entrant's best girl friend and her parent/legal guardian. Winner will be selected by the judges on the basis of the essay's uniqueness and appeal. In the event of a tie, tied entries will be re-judged just based on appeal. Criteria will be weighted equally. Entries **will not** be accepted unless all four (4) parties have signed the entry form acknowledging that they accept and agree to be bound by all Contest rules. In addition to the entry form, please submit a photo (no larger than 5" x 7") of each girl (2) or a photo of the two (2) best friends together and an essay **not to exceed 500 words** written by Entrant **describing Entrant's friendship with her best girl friend.** Please print the name of each girl on the back of the photo(s).

Entrant and her best girl friend, who also must be 8–13 years of age, do not have to reside in the same city or state, but residence must be within the 50 United States and/or District of Columbia. Essays must be submitted in English. Submission of an entry grants Sponsor and its agents the right to publish, use, adapt, edit, and /or modify such entry in any way, in any and all media, without limitation and without consideration to Entrant. Submission of any entry further constitutes Entrant's consent to irrevocably assign and transfer to Sponsor any and all rights, title, and interest in the entry, including, without limitation, all copyrights. Entries must be the original work of Entrant, may not have been previously published, may not have won previous awards, must not infringe third-party rights, and must be suitable for publication.

5. WINNER NOTIFICATION: Winner will be selected on or about April 25, 2013, by an American Girl Judging Panel whose decisions are final and binding on all matters relating to this Contest. Potential winner is subject to eligibility verification and compliance with these Official Rules. Potential winner must return all forms to administrator within fourteen (14) days of materials sent. Failure to claim prize and provide the requested information within fourteen (14) days of notification, or if Sponsor is unable to contact potential winner, that potential winner will be disqualified and an alternate winner will be selected and notified, time permitting, before scheduled June 2013 travel. Model's parents or legal guardians must agree to terms of Model employment and sign Model's employment agreements/releases as a condition of acceptance and prior to travel.

6. WINNER: One (1) Entrant will be selected to be photographed and appear on the cover of the "The Best of AG" issue of *American Girl* magazine along with her best girl friend identified in entry ("Models"). Models and their respective parent/legal guardians (1 per each girl) will be flown round-trip coach airfare from a major North American international airport designated by Sponsor, close to the Models' homes to a major airport in Chicago, Illinois; will be accommodated in a hotel designated by Sponsor for 4 days/3 nights (2 standard/double beds) for purposes of completing photography and possible public relations appearances; and will receive meals (selected by Sponsor) and ground transportation (selected by Sponsor). Any changes in travel once flights or other arrangements are reserved will be the financial responsibility of the changing party (winner and best girl friend plus parent/legal

Our Friendship Story

Attach a picture of you two here

Our friendship, in one sentence:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Write a true story telling us about your friendship in 500 words or fewer.

Both friends should fill out the form on the other side of this page. Then cut it out, attach your story, and send it to:

Cover Contest
American Girl magazine
8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

Postmark deadline: February 28, 2013

Good luck!

Friend 1

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

ZIP: _____

Phone number: _____

Birth date: _____

Yes, this is a true story of our friendship.

Your signature: _____

Yes, my daughter has my permission to enter this contest.

Parent signature: _____

Parent e-mail: _____

Friend 2

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

ZIP: _____

Phone number: _____

Birth date: _____

Yes, this is a true story of our friendship.

Your signature: _____

Yes, my daughter has my permission to enter this contest.

Parent signature: _____

Parent e-mail: _____

guardians of each). Both Models and their respective parent/legal guardians must be available for travel to Chicago for the photo shoot during the month of June 2013, specific dates to be determined. If winner, her best girl friend, and a parent/legal guardian for each are not available, an alternate winner and best girl friend will be selected, time permitting, before June 2013 travel. If Models reside within 250 miles or less of the Chicago hotel location, Sponsor, in its sole discretion, may substitute ground transportation in lieu of air transportation in the form of a gas allowance, hired car, or train tickets to the hotel location. Each Model will receive a cash honorarium for her services and all rights therein in the amount of $250.00. By agreeing to appear as a Model, both Models and the parent or legal guardian of each consent to the use of names, photos, and/or likenesses for advertising and trade purposes in connection with *American Girl* magazine, in any and all media now known or hereinafter invented without territorial or time limitations and without additional compensation, except where prohibited.

All expenses not specifically mentioned above are not included and are solely the responsibility of the respective parent/legal guardian of the Models, including, but not limited to: round-trip transportation between the residence and the departure airport, alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverages, food, gratuities and tips before arriving to Chicago, incidental and personal expenses, insurance, laundry service, luggage fees, merchandise, mini-bar, service charges, souvenirs, telephone calls, and all other expenses incidental to Model's employment and travel to/from and stay in Chicago. No Grand Prize substitutions or cash redemptions allowed. Sponsor reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to not use the photography on the cover of *American Girl* magazine. By accepting employment, the winner acknowledges compliance with these Official Rules.

Winner and her best girl friend plus parent/legal guardian must travel on the same itinerary. If Entrant's best girl friend resides in a different state, they can fly on a separate itinerary but must fly with their respective parent/legal guardian. All individuals traveling must have all necessary identification and/or travel documents. Once travel companions are selected, they may not be substituted, except in Sponsor's sole and absolute discretion. Airline tickets are not refundable or transferable and are not valid for upgrades or frequent flyer miles.

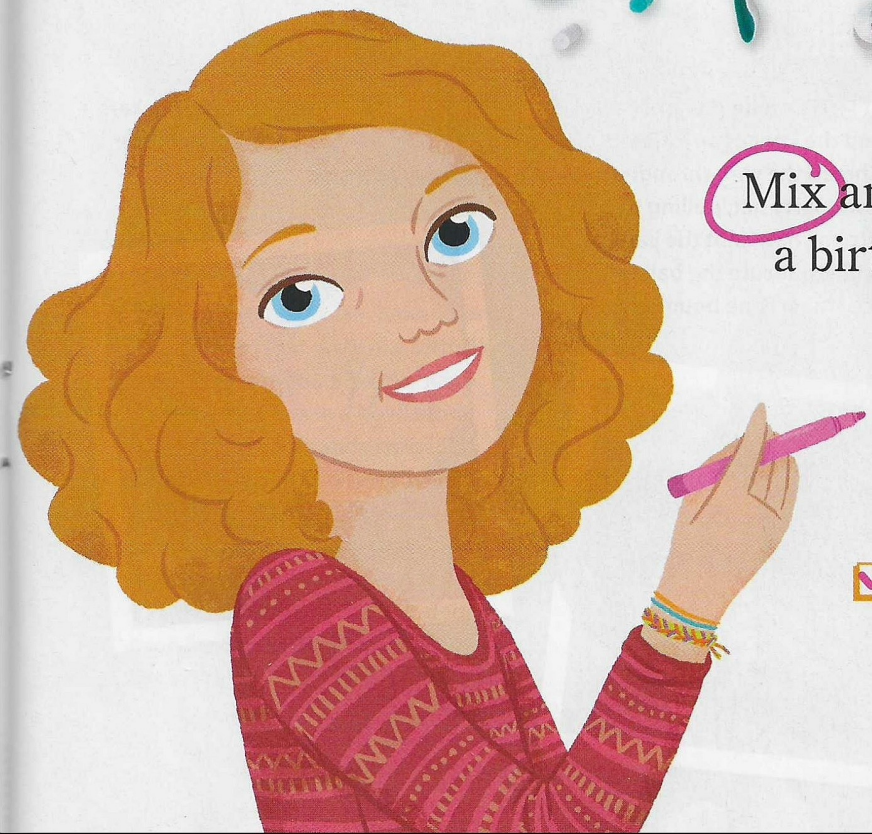
7. CONDUCT: By entering, Entrants agree that all issues and questions concerning the construction, validity, interpretation, and enforceability of these Official Rules, Entrant's rights and obligations, or the rights and obligations of the Sponsor in connection with the Contest, shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the State of Wisconsin without giving effect to any choice of law or conflict of law rules, and Entrants consent to the jurisdiction and venue of the federal, state, and local courts located in Dane County, Wisconsin. Failure to comply with these Official Rules may result in disqualification. Sponsor reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to disqualify any individual: (a) acting in any manner deemed by Sponsor to be in violation of these Official Rules; or (b) acting in any manner deemed by Sponsor to be unsportsmanlike, disruptive, and/or with intent to annoy, abuse, threaten, or harass any other person. CAUTION: ANY ATTEMPT BY A USER OR ENTRANT OR ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL TO DELIBERATELY DAMAGE OR UNDERMINE THE LEGITIMATE OPERATION OF THE CONTEST IS IN VIOLATION OF CRIMINAL AND CIVIL LAWS AND SHOULD SUCH AN ATTEMPT BE MADE, SPONSOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO SEEK DAMAGES AND COSTS (INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION, ATTORNEYS' FEES) FROM ANY SUCH PERSON TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.

8. VERIFICATION OF WINNER: Potential winners will be required to execute an affidavit of eligibility, a liability/publicity release, and other documents ("Prize Claim Documents") as may be required or permitted by law. If any potential winner or guest of winner fails or refuses to sign and return all Prize Claim Documents within fourteen (14) days of prize notifications sent, the winner may be disqualified and an alternate winner may be determined/selected and /or guest(s) will forfeit their portion of the prize. Sponsor is not responsible for any change in address of Entrants and/or guests of potential winners.

9. GENERAL: Contest is governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin, with venue in Dane County, Wisconsin, and all claims must be resolved in the local, state, or federal courts of Dane County, Wisconsin. By entering this Contest, participants agree to abide by and be bound by these Official Contest Rules and the decisions of the judges, which are final in all matters related to the Contest. Promotion Entities also reserve the right, at their sole discretion, to disqualify any individual it finds to be tampering with the entry process or the operation of the Contest. This Contest is subject to all applicable federal, state, and local laws. By participating in the Contest, participants agree to be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of the judging organization and waive any right to claim ambiguity in the Contest or these Official Rules. Winner and participants also agree to release, discharge, indemnify, and hold harmless the Promotion Entities, and the officers, employees and agents of each, from and against any claims, damages or liability due to any injuries, damages or losses to any person (including death) or property of any kind resulting in whole or in part, directly or indirectly, from acceptance, possession, misuse, use, loss, or misdirection of any prize, or participation in any Contest-related activity or participation in this Contest, or any other error in the offering or announcement of any prize and hereby waive all rights to claim, punitive, incidental, consequential, or any other damages, other than for actual out of pocket expenses; all causes of action arising out of or connected with this promotion, or any prize awarded shall be resolved individually, without resort to any form of class action; and any and all claims, judgments, and award shall be limited to actual out-of-pocket costs incurred, excluding attorneys' fees and court costs. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, illegible, incomplete, misdirected, or postage-due mail/requests. If you are selected as the winner, your information may also be included in a publicly available winner's list.

10. WINNER'S LIST: For the name of the winner, send a self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to *American Girl 2013 Magazine Cover Contest Winner's List*, PO Box 620497, Middleton WI 53562-0497. All such requests must be received by April 22, 2013.

Pick-your-own Party



Mix and match these party ideas for a birthday bash that's totally you!

Invitation

Who will you invite? Friends? Family? Neighbors? Check with a parent, then tell guests what they need to know.

Party Post: Spread the word with an invitation designed by you! Choose your colors, artwork, and more using AG's invitation maker. Get started at americangirl.com/playmagazine.

Decorations

Start with classic party decorations, then find ways to make them special.

Paper Streamers

- [ ] **Streamer Stripes:** Hang mobiles over your food table. Start with the inner section of an embroidery hoop. Cover the inside of the hoop with double-stick tape. Cut many 2-foot-long paper streamers. Fold one end of each streamer over the hoop and attach it to the tape. Keep adding streamers (overlapping slightly) until the hoop is covered. Ask an adult to help you hang the mobiles with string.

- [ ] **Fun Fringe:** Use these streamers as garlands or as curtains. First cut a 6-foot-long piece of paper streamer. Fold the streamer in half three times. Use scissors to cut fringe along the sides (not the folded ends). Unfold and ask an adult to help you hang them.

- [ ] **Party Pompoms:** Wrap a paper streamer around a 3-by-5-inch index card (lengthwise) about 10 to 15 times. Cut it off the roll. Remove the card and tightly tie string around the middle of the paper. Cut the paper loops on both sides. Then cut toward the middle to create thin strips. Fluff the strips to make a pompom. Thread pompoms on a string or attach to straws.

Balloons

- [ ] **Sprinkle Balloons:** Put large pieces of round paper confetti inside a clear deflated balloon. Ask an adult to help inflate the balloon and knot the end. Shake the balloon so the confetti sticks to the inside.

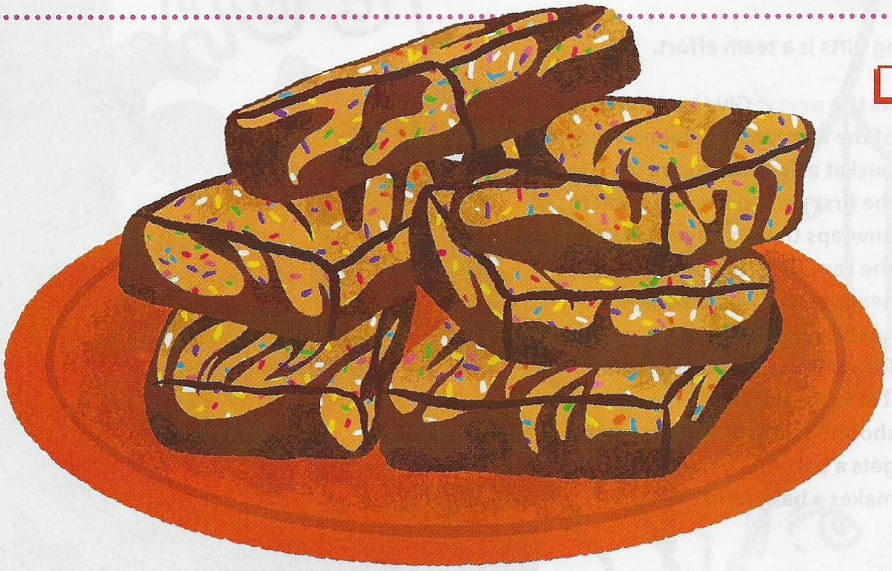
- [ ] **Float Cones:** Tie a long piece of yarn around the knot of an inflated balloon. Thread the yarn through an upside-down party hat, pulling the balloon into the hat. Knot the yarn below the hat to secure the balloon. Make an ice cream cone bouquet!

- [ ] **Speech Balloons:** Attach letter stickers to inflated balloons to create words or a birthday message.

Creative Cakes

Use a cake mix to make a deliciously different dessert.

Crispy Cake: Here's a cake with crunch! Ask an adult to follow a recipe for rice cereal treats. Before adding the rice cereal in the recipe, the adult should add ⅓ cup of dry white cake mix and 2 tablespoons candy sprinkles to the melted marshmallow mixture. Press treats into a greased 8-inch round cake pan. Let set. Remove from the pan.



Birthday Brownies: These brownies are swirled with cake! First make brownie batter using one 19.5-oz. brownie mix. Pour the batter into a greased 13-by-9-inch pan. Next, put one 9-oz. package of Jiffy® cake mix, 1 egg, and 2 tablespoons of water in a bowl. Stir until a dough forms. Stir in 1 tablespoon of candy sprinkles. Drop spoonfuls of the cake dough on top of the brownie batter. Drag a butter knife through the pan to swirl the cake and brownies together. Top with more candy sprinkles. Ask an adult to bake them in a 350-degree oven for 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool.

Confetti Cookies: Bake colorful cookies that taste like birthday cake. Pour one 18.25-oz. package of white cake mix in a bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of candy sprinkles. Then add ⅓ cup of oil and 1 egg. Stir until a dough forms. Drop dough by spoonfuls on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Ask an adult to bake the cookies in a 350-degree oven for 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool. Decorate with frosting if you'd like!

Games & Activities

Birthday Bows: Make a silly birthday tiara.

Before the party: Hope that guests will put a bow or ribbon on their gifts!

At the party: Wear a plain plastic headband when you open your birthday gifts. As you open each gift, attach the ribbon or bow to your headband. Then wear the birthday tiara for the rest of the party.

Wrapped-Up Relay: In this game, unwrapping gifts is a team effort.

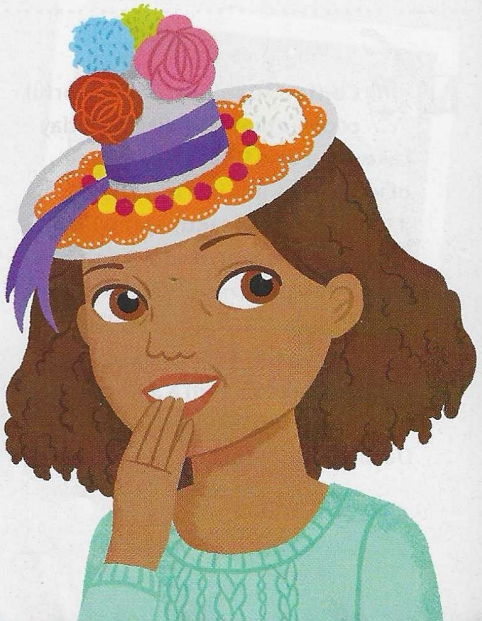
Before the party: Divide the number of guests into two equal teams. Wrap a small foam ball in a small box. Continue to box and wrap the package until it has as many layers as there are team members. Repeat with another package so that each team has one large wrapped package.

At the party: Give each team one of the wrapped packages. Place a bucket across the room. On "Go!" the first person from each team unwraps the first layer as fast as she can. Then she passes it to the next person, who unwraps the next layer. When a team reaches the ball, one player should throw it into the bucket. (The teams keep shooting until one of the teams gets a ball in.) The team that makes a basket first wins.

Ha-Ha Hatters: Design your own party hats!

Before the party: Put a few craft supplies into paper bags. (You should have a bag for each guest.) Include items such as a paper plate, a paper cup, stickers, fake flowers, beads, etc.

At the party: Provide your guests with a covered work surface and supplies to share such as scissors, glue, tape, elastic cord, and a hole punch. Give each guest a bag of bonus supplies and tell them not to peek! On "Go!" everyone has 5 minutes to make a party hat using all the items in their bags. The funnier the better! When time's up, model your crazy creations.



Snacks

- [ ] **Colorful Crunchers:** Create a pop of color! Pour about 9 cups of popped popcorn into a large bowl. Ask an adult to melt 1½ cups of candy melts. Have the adult pour the melted candy over the popcorn. Quickly stir until the popcorn is coated. Spread the mixture on a rimmed baking sheet. Top with colored sprinkles. Let candy harden, then break into pieces.

- [ ] **Little Dippers:** Serve up a starry snack. Use cookie cutters to cut shapes from tortillas. (Spray with butter and sprinkle with salt or cinnamon-sugar if you'd like.) Ask an adult to bake them in a 400-degree oven until crispy, about 10 minutes. Serve with hummus or dip.

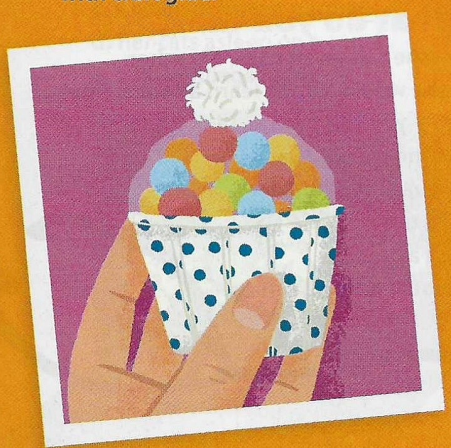
- [ ] **Party Poppers:** Make these cool treats the day before the party. First put a thin layer of candy sprinkles in the bottom of an ice-cube tray. Fill the ice-cube tray with yogurt. Freeze overnight. Remove the yogurt from the tray and serve in bowls with spoons.

Favors

- [ ] **Cute Cupcakes:** Give cupcakes to go! Fill a plastic sandwich bag with candy or gumballs and tie the bag closed. Turn the bag upside down and place in a paper treat cup (available at craft and party supply stores). Glue a pompom to the top with craft glue.

- [ ] **Bags of Fun:** Send guests home with a craft. Give each of your guests a mini gift bag with a small notebook and set of stickers inside. Each guest can decorate her notebook with stickers. When she uses it, she'll remember your party.

- [ ] **Sweet Gifts:** Wrap mini candy bars with strips of wrapping paper and top with mini bows. Place a few candy bars inside a tiny gift bag. Give a bag to each guest as she leaves. ★



Illustrations: Julia Bereciartu, Yulia Brodskaya

What Will Your Friend Be Like in 2020?

Imagine your pal's life in seven years. Take this quiz together and guess which answers she'll pick.

1. When she isn't busy with school, your friend might have a job

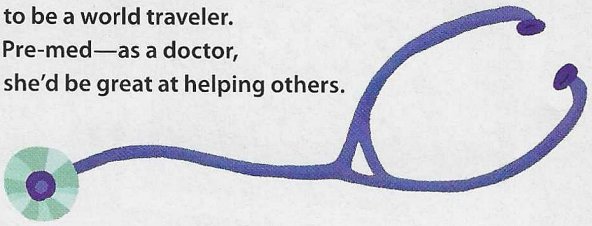
a. selling organic bath products at a soap shop.
b. making sweet treats at a cute bakery.
c. working at an indoor rock-climbing gym.
d. writing for a teen magazine.
e. helping out at the mayor's office.

2. What might be on your friend's favorite T-shirt?

a. A pretty beach scene
b. The cover of a classic book
c. A black guitar and the words "I rock!"
d. A peace sign
e. A funny drawing of her dog

3. Your friend has picked her college major. What do you think it is?

a. Education—she can't wait to be a teacher.
b. Zoology—she would love to learn about animals.
c. Architecture—you can picture all of those skyscrapers she'd design.
d. Foreign languages—she's destined to be a world traveler.
e. Pre-med—as a doctor, she'd be great at helping others.



4. In 2020, what would be the perfect birthday gift for your friend?

a. A sparkly pair of earrings
b. Baking pans and cake mix
c. Tickets to a sold-out concert
d. A gift card to her favorite coffee shop
e. Some cool vintage cowboy boots

5. After a stressful day, your friend might

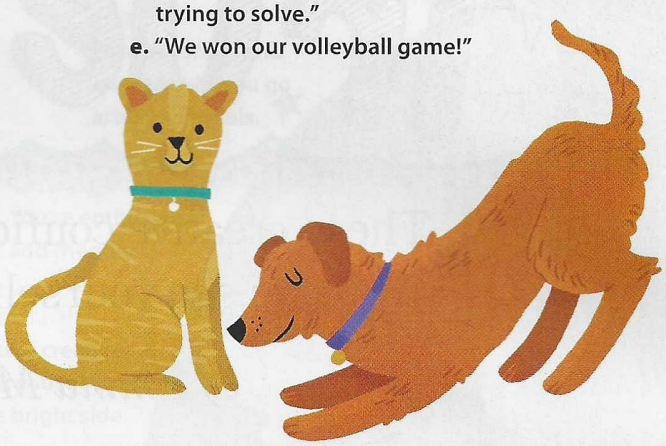
a. clean her room—she feels better when things are organized.
b. watch a movie that makes her laugh.
c. go for a long run.
d. go to the library and sit in a quiet corner with a book.
e. meditate.

6. Your pal in 2020 likes to post pictures on a website. The shot she likes best is one of

a. her jewelry collection.
b. buildings in a city.
c. a colorful flower garden.
d. her cats asleep on a couch.
e. a little village in Africa.

7. In your friend's future journal, she might start an entry by saying,

a. "I love volunteering at the animal shelter."
b. "I don't know what to wear to the dance."
c. "I'm excited to leave for Paris tomorrow."
d. "I'm stuck on a calculus problem that I'm trying to solve."
e. "We won our volleyball game!"



8. Your friend just got a car! What will it look like?

a. It's bright red and covered with bumper stickers.
b. It's light blue with soft, comfy seats.
c. It's pink, and she plugs it in to recharge it.
d. It's a mud-covered truck.
e. She drives a motorcycle (with a matching helmet).

Scoring

Give yourself one point for each answer that matched what your friend chose for herself. Now ask her to answer the questions about you. ★

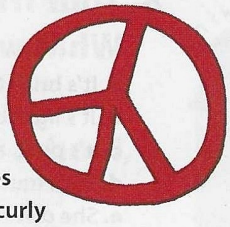
Illustrations: Alyssa Nassner

True Colors

These creative confidence boosters can help you see yourself as a masterpiece.

by Emma MacLaren Henke

Great Traits



Write your name on a piece of paper and draw the things you like best about yourself. Are you an ice-skater who loves to sing? Sketch some skates and musical notes. Do you love your curly hair? Are you proud of your grades? Add your favorite hairstyle and an "A+".

Heart Art

Create a collage to show what you love. Draw a heart and fill it with people, places, memories—anything that makes your heart soar. If you want to use photos, get permission first. Sketch your pets, or cut pictures from old magazines. Another idea is to create a collage that shows off a color you love. For example, you could make a pink collage filled with roses, cotton candy, and flamingos.

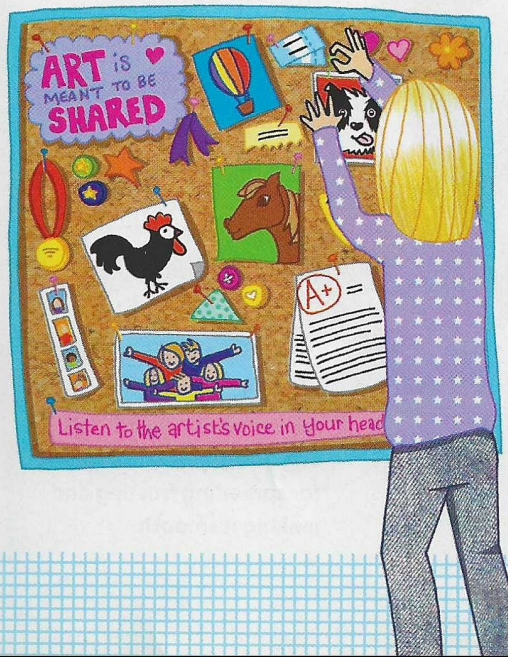
Tip: Cut out your heart art when you're done filling it in. Keep it as a valentine to yourself. You can also make another heart for someone special as a way to share your love.

Picture Perfect

Create a self-portrait—but turn your portrait into an object that represents your personality. Say, for example, you love that you're a great reader. You could draw yourself as a book wearing a colorful outfit.

Display your artwork in these spots to remind yourself that you're awesome:

- Put it on your bedroom door.
- Hang it on your bathroom mirror.
- Scan it and display it on your computer desktop.
- Tack it onto an inspiration board.



Illustrations: Charlie Alder

Hue You

Still having trouble seeing your best qualities? You can look to your favorite color to find even more to love about yourself.

Red

Your boldness and energy help you go after your goals.

Orange

You're enthusiastic and friendly.

Yellow

You're creative, and you look on the bright side.

Green

You're smart, and you care about your community.

Blue

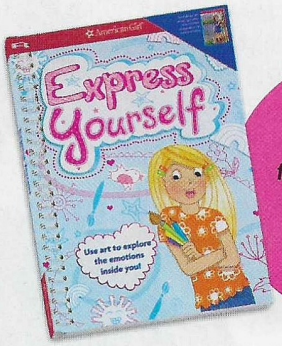
You're responsible and trusting, and you like to help others get along.

Purple

You're independent and generous.

Pink

You're warm, nurturing, and refined. ★



More fun art projects can be found in the book **Express Yourself.**

Frost a Cake

Did you bake a yummy cake? Here are some secrets for making it look even more delicious!

Before you frost:

Always start with a cake that is completely cooled. Use clean hands or a pastry brush to remove any loose cake crumbs before you frost.

pastry brush

Place three overlapping strips of wax paper on a plate in a triangle shape. Set the unfrosted cake on top of the wax paper. After the cake is frosted, carefully pull out the paper strips for a clean plate!

Choose a plate or tray that's at least one inch larger all around than your cake.

Make frosting: Ask an adult to beat 1 cup butter (softened), 1 teaspoon vanilla, and 1 tablespoon milk with an electric mixer. Gradually add 1 (32-oz.) bag of powdered sugar. Have the adult mix until smooth. Add more milk if needed. Add food coloring, a little at a time, if you like. Here's what it will frost:

24 cupcakes

9-by-13-inch cake

8-inch round 2-layer cake

A special utensil called an angled spatula works great for spreading frosting and making it smooth.

cake 2
frosting
cake 1
When frosting a layer cake, place the first layer upside down (so the rounded side faces down). Then frost the flat side that's facing up. Place the second cake layer on top of the first with the rounded side up. Then frost the top and sides.
Frost the top of the cake first: Place some frosting in the middle and push it out to the cake's edges. Then frost the cake's sides.
To smooth out the frosting, run the spatula under warm water. Shake off excess water and use the spatula to make a smooth finish.
Make sweet flowers! Use clean kitchen scissors to cut mini marshmallows in half at an angle. Place the marshmallows in a sandwich bag with a few tablespoons of colored sugar. Shake to coat the cut side of each marshmallow. Arrange them in a flower shape on a frosted cake. Add a candy center. Try making other shapes, too!

Photo: Radlund Photography Illustrations: Mary Beth Cryan

Voicing a Dream

by Ashlyn W.

Autumn was born to play basketball, but is that her real passion?

Autumn Harper burst through her front door on a crisp winter afternoon, her cheeks flushed and wisps of brown hair coming loose from her ponytail. She ran into the big, warm kitchen, where her mom was making cookies. "Mom! I got the best news today!"

"I know!" Her mom smiled. "I got the e-mail this morning. Are you excited?"

"I am so excited!" Autumn said, her green eyes shining. "Wait. How did you know? Did Mrs. Allen e-mail you?"

"Why would your drama teacher e-mail me about the basketball tryouts?"

"Mom, that wasn't my news."

"What was your news?" Mrs. Harper looked surprised. "I can't imagine anything more exciting than the basketball tryouts."

"Yeah," Autumn sighed.

Mrs. Harper noticed her quietness. "Are you nervous?"

"No, I'm fine," Autumn said.

"Good. You're going to do great," Mrs. Harper said. "And there's still time to practice—the tryouts aren't until the twenty-seventh."

"The twenty-seventh?" Autumn's heart sank.

"Yes. Why?"

"Mom, I can't go to the tryouts this year!"

"What?" Mrs. Harper looked up in surprise.

"Not if they're on the twenty-seventh!"

Suddenly, Autumn's little brother ran into the kitchen.

"Mom!" Austin called. "Becca's crying. We were playing and she fell down."

Mrs. Harper turned to follow Austin to his room. "I'll be right back."

Autumn walked over to the kitchen window, where a beautiful sunset was glimmering pink and red light across the sky. How was she going to tell her parents that instead of basketball, she wanted to act in the school play? They were so proud whenever she ran out onto the court, and she didn't want to disappoint them. She *couldn't* disappoint them.

A few weeks earlier, her drama teacher, Mrs. Allen, had changed Autumn's life when she told the class, "I am excited to announce that *The Runaway Orphan* will be our next play."

Mariah, Autumn's best friend, turned to her and said, "Autumn, you totally have to try out! You'd be perfect for the role of Sarah!"

Autumn smiled shyly. She would love to play Sarah. Sarah was the heroine and was her favorite character in the play.

Mrs. Allen's voice broke through Autumn's thoughts. "Auditions will be on Friday, and the performance will be on the twenty-seventh. Remember, practice makes perfect! Go over your lines. Really put yourself in the character's shoes and try to imagine what she or he would be feeling."

After school, the two friends walked to Autumn's house. As the girls settled in Autumn's room, Autumn handed Mariah the script and said, "At lunch I memorized the first few lines of scene four." Autumn pointed to where it was in the script. "Can you practice the scene with me?"

"Oh, Sarah!" Mariah cried out dramatically. "What are we going to do?"

"We have to stick together now, John." Autumn's face filled with sadness as she acted out the scene. "We have no one else. I'll take care of you, John! I promise!"

"Will you?" Mariah asked.

"I will, John. You can count on me." Autumn's face changed from pure sadness to a serious determination.

"Oh, Autumn!" Mariah smiled as she handed

Illustrations: Genevieve Kote

back the script. "You're wonderful! You're totally going to get this role!"

"I hope so." Autumn put the script back into her backpack and smiled.

After Mariah and Autumn worked on their homework for an hour, Mariah took off for her house, and Autumn walked down to the kitchen and grabbed an apple.

"Hey, honey!" Autumn's dad walked into the kitchen and gave her a hug. "I heard you and Mariah in your room. What were you doing?"

"We're doing a play at school," Autumn said between apple bites. "I was practicing some lines with her. I would really love to audition for the lead role." She looked to see his reaction.

"That'd be fine with me." Mr. Harper grabbed an apple and sat next to her at the kitchen table. "Just make sure you keep shooting hoops in the driveway every day. You don't want to get too rusty. The date for basketball tryouts will be announced soon, and I bet there's going to be some tough competition this year."

"Cool," Autumn sighed. Another basketball season was almost here. Somehow, she couldn't share her dad's excitement.

"Very cool!" Mr. Harper smiled. "This is your year, Autumn. You're going to be great!"

"Thanks. I'd better get to shooting hoops."

She liked basketball—sort of. She was built for it, being 5 feet 9 inches at 12 years old, and she was a pretty good player, but she wasn't passionate about it. She loved acting. But her parents wanted her to be a college basketball player. She walked out to the driveway and stared up at the basketball hoop. *Will I ever be able to say, "I really don't want to try out for basketball this year. I just want to focus on acting."*

All week, Autumn practiced her lines every chance she could get. Even as she practiced her free throws, she was running lines of the play

"Why don't you tell your parents how you feel?"

through her head. It felt so natural for her to pick up the script and become Sarah, the runaway orphan, as she out acted the lines in the mirror. She'd never felt that way about basketball.

Next day in class, Mrs. Allen called, "Autumn Harper," as she scanned her group of students for Autumn. "You're up first. Are you ready?"

Autumn stepped onto the stage nervously and tried to ignore the single spotlight shining down on her. The school's auditorium was filled with students trying out for the play. Mrs. Allen sat at a dimly lit table next to the stage, waiting patiently for Autumn to begin. Autumn took a deep breath and pictured herself as Sarah, frantically waiting outside Mrs. White's door.

"Mrs. White, I need help!" Autumn's voice was filled with panic. "John's sick, and I don't know what to do!"

"Hold on, darling." Mrs. Allen spoke the role of Mrs. White. "What's wrong with him?"

"He just keeps coughing! I don't know what's wrong. Please come, Mrs. White! I need you!" Autumn's eyes filled with tears.

"Of course, child! Lead the way." Mrs. Allen ended the scene and looked up. "Autumn, that was very good. You really understand Sarah."

Autumn smiled. "Thank you, Mrs. Allen!"

"I can tell you've been working very hard. I will announce the cast tomorrow."

Autumn walked home, relieved that the audition was done but anxious to know the results. She went into the garage, grabbed a basketball, and practiced her three-point shot. Her dad came outside. He loved watching her practice.

"Nice shot!" Mr. Harper said. "Try shooting from the end of the driveway."

"The end of the driveway?" Autumn walked down the long driveway. After dribbling, she let the ball go sailing through the air, right into the net.

Mr. Harper grinned and gave her two thumbs up. Ever since she could remember, he always gave her two thumbs up whenever she made a huge play during a game.

"Thanks, Dad." Autumn said and made another shot, but her mind was far from the basketball hoop. Was Mrs. Allen choosing who would play each part right now? Would she get the part?

Now Autumn stood looking out the kitchen window at the beautiful sunset, remembering yesterday's audition. Glimmers of pink and red light danced across the kitchen wall, and the cookies baking in the oven filled the air with their sweet scent. Autumn dug through her backpack and found a manila envelope with her parents' names written on the front. Austin, Autumn's little brother, ran into the kitchen. Mrs. Harper followed behind him, carrying Autumn's little sister, Becca.

"It hurts, Mommy!" Two big tears rolled down Becca's cheeks as she looked down at her bruised knee.

"I'm sorry, honey! It'll feel better in a few minutes." Mrs. Harper made an ice pack, placed it on Becca's knee, and said, "All better, sweetheart?"

"All better, Mommy," Becca said, wiping her teary eyes.

"Mom?" Autumn handed her mom the envelope. "I have a letter and permission slip for you from Mrs. Allen."

"For what, honey?" Mrs. Harper opened the envelope and took out the paper. She read the first few sentences, then looked at at her daughter and gave Autumn a big hug. "That's so exciting! You got the part!"

"Mom, the play is on the twenty-seventh." Autumn said quietly. "The same day as the tryout."

"Well, just call Mrs. Allen and explain why you can't do it. She'll understand."

"But...Mom!" Autumn couldn't believe it.

"What? It's not like you can do both." Mrs. Harper looked surprised. "It's just a school play."

"But, Mom, it's not just a school play, and I really enjoy it," Autumn exclaimed.

"This is the first time I've heard about this," Mrs. Harper said. "You may like acting, and it may be fun, but you can't just give up all of your dreams for one school play."

"It's more than that, Mom!" Autumn said, trying to get her mom to understand.

"So you're just going to give up basketball? You're going to give up everything you've worked so hard for?"

"No." Autumn sighed, feeling frustrated because she couldn't say what she was feeling. She looked outside at the basketball hoop on the driveway. *She just doesn't understand! And I don't know how to make her understand,* Autumn thought.

"Don't lose sight of your dreams, Autumn. You were born to play basketball."

Autumn tried again. "Mom, I really want to do this play."

"This play isn't going to get you a scholarship like basketball will. Besides, you like playing basketball, don't you?"

Autumn hesitated. "Yeah."

"Then do it!" Mrs. Harper smiled as she said, "You're going to be an all-star!"

Autumn smiled weakly. "That'll be great, Mom."

The phone rang, and Mrs. Harper answered it. This conversation was obviously over.

Autumn grabbed her pink zebra-striped backpack and slowly walked up to her basketball-themed bedroom. Basketballs were everywhere—on the desk, the bedspread, and the walls. Her dad knocked on the door, shaking the mini basketball hoop attached to it.

"Come in," Autumn said from her bed.

"Honey, I know you want to be in this play, but these basketball tryouts are really important," Mr. Harper explained, sitting down on her bed. "This is the last year before high school, and you need to learn as much as you can."

"I know, Dad."

"Go to Mrs. Allen tomorrow and talk to her. She'll understand. And it's early enough for her to find someone to replace you."

She didn't know what else to say, so she just said, "OK, Dad."

"Hey, I'm really proud of you for getting this part!" He gave her a hug.

"Thanks, Dad." Autumn said as he got up to leave her room.

The next morning, Autumn got to school early and walked to the drama room. Mrs. Allen was already there, and she looked up when Autumn entered.

"Well, if it isn't Sarah, the runaway orphan, herself!" Mrs. Allen grinned. "What's up?"

"I'm not going to be able to play Sarah in the play." Autumn looked at the ground.

"Why not?" Mrs. Allen asked, confused.

"Basketball tryouts are the twenty-seventh." Autumn sighed.

"Oh." Mrs. Allen looked disappointed. "I didn't know you played basketball."

"I do," Autumn said weakly.

Mrs. Allen looked at her curiously. "Do you enjoy it?"

"Yes," Autumn started. She stopped, looked up, and then burst out, "No. No, I don't!"

"You don't?" Mrs. Allen looked surprised. "Then why do you do it?"

"I have to." Autumn sighed. "I can't disappoint my parents."

Mrs. Allen pointed to an empty desk. "Let's talk."

Autumn sat down in the desk next to her teacher.

"Why do you have to play basketball?"

"My parents want me to. I'm pretty good, and they think I can become an all-star in high school and then get a scholarship to college."

"But you don't enjoy it?" Mrs. Allen asked.

"No. I dread every season!"

"Why don't you tell your parents how you feel?"

"I can't do that." Autumn looked up.

"Autumn, do you want to play basketball your entire life?"

"No." Autumn shook her head, looking back down at the desk.

"Have you ever told your parents that you didn't want to play basketball?"

"No, I haven't."

"Then how are they going to know that you don't want to do it?"

Autumn sat silently.

"Do you think that maybe they really enjoy seeing how great you are in basketball, and they just automatically assumed that it's your dream, since you haven't told them what your real dreams are?"

Autumn looked at her teacher. "I never thought about it that way before."

"What is your dream, Autumn?"

Suddenly at that moment, Autumn's dream became crystal clear. "I want to be an actress."

Mrs. Allen smiled. "That's a wonderful dream. But Autumn, dreams don't just happen. Reaching your dreams takes hard work and dedication. And you're not going to reach them this way."

Autumn stared at the desk, thinking.

"You have a voice, Autumn." Mrs. Allen said. "Your parents love you. They want what's best for you," Mrs. Allen explained. "But they don't know

what your real dream is."

Autumn silently nodded. "I need to tell them that. I need to tell them how I feel. I need to tell them how I *really* feel."

"You have a voice, Autumn," Mrs. Allen repeated. "Be respectful, and let your parents know how you're feeling."

Autumn stood up, then turned to give Mrs. Allen a hug. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." Mrs. Allen smiled. As Autumn started to walk away, Mrs. Allen called, "Autumn?"

Autumn turned around.

"We're starting practice for the play tomorrow at four in the auditorium. I hope you'll be there."

Autumn grinned. "I hope so, too!"

"Good." Mrs. Allen smiled.

That night, Autumn walked into the living room, where her parents were reading.

"Hey there," Mrs. Harper said as she put down her book. "You were very quiet at dinner. Did you talk to Mrs. Allen?"

"Yep." Autumn sat down on the couch. "Now I really need to talk to you guys."

Mr. Harper glanced up from his laptop, looking worried. "Is everything OK?"

Autumn took a deep breath. "I don't want to play basketball."

Her mom and dad looked surprised.

"Why?" Mrs. Harper asked.

"I've never really liked playing basketball. I know I'm built for it, and I'm good at it, but I'm just not passionate about it."

"Not passionate about it? You play with passion!" Mr. Harper said. "Maybe you're just too tired."

Autumn shook her head. She stood in the awkward silence, wanting to break it but not knowing what else to say.

"Why didn't you ever say something?" Mrs. Harper asked her daughter softly.

"I just didn't want to disappoint you and Dad," Autumn said.

"You wouldn't have disappointed us," Mr. Harper said. "We want you to follow your dreams. We never realized that you didn't love playing basketball."

"I'm sorry, Autumn," Mrs. Harper said. "Being a basketball star was my dream for myself when I was your age. But when I injured myself and wasn't able to play anymore, I was devastated. I wanted you to get the chance I didn't have. When I saw how good you were, I started dreaming that maybe you would become a basketball star."

"You have a voice, Autumn," Mrs. Allen repeated.

"It's OK, Mom," Autumn said. "I should have told you a long time ago how I was feeling."

"You can always talk to us," Mr. Harper said, coming over to hug Autumn.

Autumn smiled. "I will. I have a voice. I know that now."

"You definitely do!" Mrs. Harper said. "Now tell us, what is your dream?"

Autumn told her mom and dad all about the play and her dreams for the future. Her parents told her how excited they were to come see the play, and how proud they were of her for getting the part.

Several weeks later, Autumn stood onstage, waiting for the play to begin.

Mrs. Allen ran out onto the stage. She smiled at Autumn. "Break a leg, everyone!"

The crowd quieted down. The single spotlight shone down on Autumn as she stepped into the role of Sarah, standing in a room in a pretty pink dress and bonnet. The curtain opened.

Although *The Runaway Orphan* was an hour-long play, it felt it had been only a few minutes before the curtain closed and the cast came back out for one final bow.

The crowd's cheers and clapping rang through the entire room. As Autumn took her final bow, the applause grew louder, and soon everyone was standing and cheering for her. She scanned the auditorium to find her family in the crowd, and she smiled.

Her dad raised both hands in the air and made sure Autumn was looking directly at him. His grin grew larger as he gave Autumn two thumbs up. It was at that moment she knew without a doubt that she was going to be an actress someday. She had found her voice, and now she was ready to follow her dreams. ★

Meet the Author

Ashlyn W.

When I was 12 years old, I won *American Girl* magazine's short story contest. My dream is to become an author who writes stories just like this one—stories that inspire people to follow their own dreams!

Mini Mailboxes

Start here!

Mini Mailboxes

Deliver wee valentine greetings to friends in mini mailboxes. For a stand, paint a craft-wood candleholder, and let it dry. Then glue the stand to the center of a mailbox tin or a mini metal box. If the lid's not already attached, secure the lid's bottom edge to the box with duct tape. Slip a card or gift inside. Look for candleholders and mini mailboxes at department stores, craft stores, or online.

Deliver a mailbox to your doll. Decorate the box with stickers, and attach her name. Add miniature letters, postcards, newspapers, or packages, and raise the flag!

Snail-Mail Sweets

Tickle a teacher or please a pal with this postal present. Wrap a small box of valentine candies in grocery-bag paper, and address it to someone special. Decorate a mini mailbox with sticker strips, and then slip the peewee package inside the box.

Shipment of Wishes

Wow someone with dozens of wishes! Fold a gift tag in thirds, and open it again to write a wish. Seal the wish with a sticker. Add a small sticker "stamp" and label if you like. Create more wishes, and deliver them in a mini mailbox.

"Junk" Mail

Stuff a mini mailbox with a collection of small gifts, such as socks, sweets, jewelry, or key chains in coordinating colors. Give the gift to the hostess of a party, a special friend, or a birthday girl! ★

Turn to page 48 for the answers.

Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

Soft & Snuggly

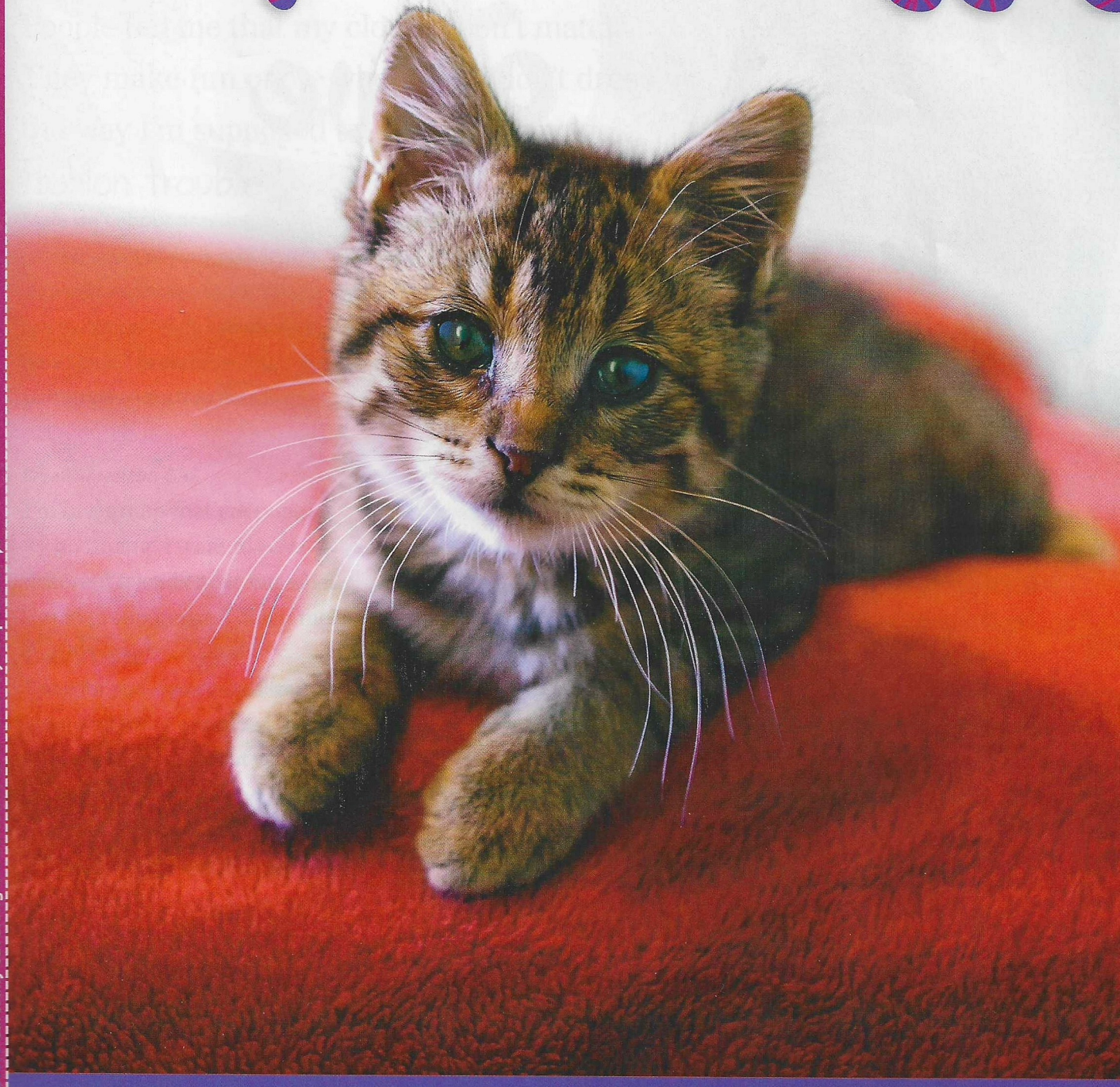


Photo: MaxyM/Shutterstock.com

Posters Carefully cut along the dotted lines to remove your posters.

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Lots of Love

Photo: Image Source/Getty Images

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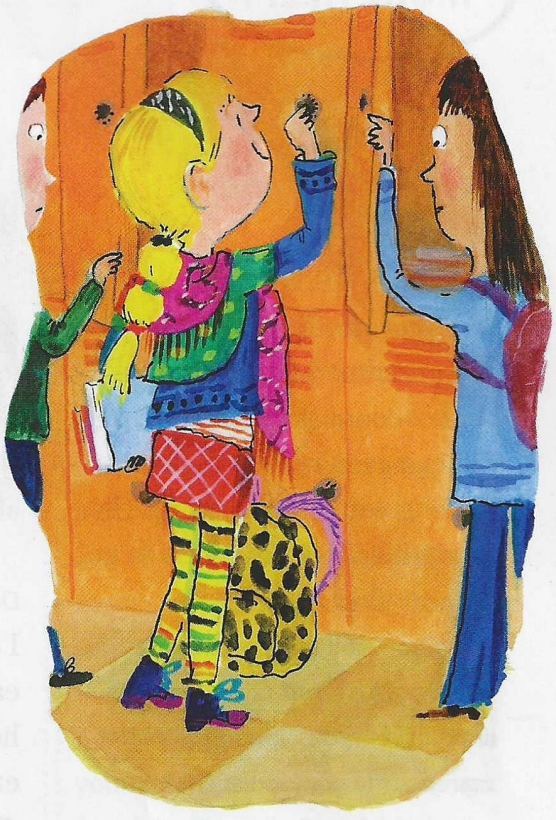
HELP!



Dear *American Girl,*

People tell me that my clothes don't match. They make fun of me whenever I don't dress the way I'm supposed to. But I like my look!

Fashion trouble

Style isn't about dressing as you're *supposed* to. Your style is a unique combination of your personality, creativity, and confidence. Dress in a way that expresses those things, and it will be the perfect style for you. Say to critics: "Well, I guess we have different tastes in clothes. I like how I look." Remember, though: it's important to dress a certain way sometimes—such as for a fancy occasion or some worship services.

Dear *American Girl,*

I'm in a group that got popular by gossiping. I want to have different friends now, but what if this group gossips about me?

Confused

Good for you—you've realized that gossiping isn't a good idea. These girls might gossip about you, and you can choose to defend yourself or to let it go. You can't prevent others' bad behavior, but you can promise yourself to stop gossiping and to put a positive vibe around all that you do. If you do that, most people won't believe any gossip about you.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

My birthday is in winter. I've always wanted a swimming party, but I don't want to have my party in the summer!

wanted to swim

Since flying you and your friends to Hawaii probably isn't an option, how about having an indoor pool party? A health club, community center, or local hotel might have a pool you could use. Games, food, and fun from outdoor pool parties in past issues of AG (check your library) can give you some great ideas that work even in winter. Have a happy birthday!

★

Dear *American Girl,*

Ever since my mom got a new phone, she texts constantly. Now everyone has to try five times to get her attention!

texting and texting

Just like a kid with a new toy, your mom loves her phone and wants to play with it. But she wouldn't want you to think that she cares more about her phone than about you, so pick a time when she isn't texting to tell her how you feel. Agree on a word for you to use when you need her attention. Use the word wisely—not just when you're annoyed by her phone use.

★

Illustrations Laura Cornell

MORE HELP!

Dear *American Girl,*

My grandma just died, and a school counselor offered to put me in a group of kids who are dealing with similar things. It might help, but I'm afraid to go. What should I do?

Ask a parent if you can try one meeting. After, you can decide if it's right for you. You might feel scared and awkward at first, but you also might find a group of friends to support you. Losing a loved one is hard. It's important to have help getting through it.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

My artwork isn't the best, so I always say that I don't like it. But when I do that, my friend gets mad and tells me to quit showing off! I'm NOT—am I?

show off ?

Girls sometimes don't see themselves the way others do. You might not love your art, but that doesn't mean it's bad. It could be that your friend thinks your art is great and feels that when you pick on it, you're just trying to get her to compliment you. So stop bashing your art. Focus on *doing* your best, rather than *being* the best. No matter what happens, that's always something to celebrate.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I can't help that I'm a picky eater. But when I'm at a friend's house, I feel rude when I don't eat the food that's being served.

picky

The polite thing to do is to take at least one bite of everything that's served. (Concentrate on not making an *ewww!* face.) The fact is, your tastes can change, and you'll never know if you've started liking something until you try it. Even if you don't love the meal, thank your hosts—you'll seem very polite.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

My best friend's mom is getting divorced for a second time. I feel really bad that my friend has to go through this, but she doesn't want to talk about it. What can I do to help?

Helpless

Your friend might not be ready to talk about her mom's divorce, so you can support her in other ways. If she's moving, offer to help her organize her stuff. If she seems distracted in class, offer to help her study. Invite her to a movie or a sleepover to get her mind off her troubles. No need to talk about what's going on—just being there for your friend will mean the world.

★

even MORE HELP!

Dear *American Girl,*

My best friend has a friend who is mean to me. My friend really likes her and asks me to come over to play when that friend is over. But I don't want to play with that girl!

a friend

It's hard when you don't get along with your friends' friends. But it's OK for you to avoid this other girl. Set up times to hang out with your friend, just the two of you, and if she asks why you don't want to be around her new friend, you can just say, "It's fine that you two are friends, but I don't think she and I are the best fit." You don't need to make her choose between you—that could cost you a friend.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

I have so many magazines! I want to keep them because they have stories, recipes, and other fun things, but they take up too much space in my room.

Too many magazines

Here's a way to keep all your favorite features and reduce the clutter: Fill a three-ring binder with plastic page sleeves, and tear out your favorite pages to save in them. You can arrange pages by date or activity. If you can't bear to get rid of (or tear up!) magazines, keep them neat by making the Cool Caddy craft on page 5.

★

Dear *American Girl,*

Two years ago, I had the most amazing teacher. She helped me realize something really important about myself, and I owe her a lot. The trouble is, I was too shy to thank her. Now I'm at a different school, and she has moved away.

Guilty

It's easier than ever to find people after they've moved. Check with your old school to see if they have an address for your teacher, or ask a parent to help you search online. It isn't easy to tell people how much they mean to you. But if you feel nervous again, remember that saying something nice will make someone's day and save you from feeling regret later. Tell this teacher how she helped you. And next time you feel like thanking someone, go for it! You'll be glad you did.

★

Advice from You

"This might sound silly at first, but whenever you're not feeling confident, try saying *'I can do this. I can do this'* over and over in your head. Sooner or later, you'll start to believe it!

Anna S.

Age 10, Pennsylvania

Need advice? Got advice? Write:

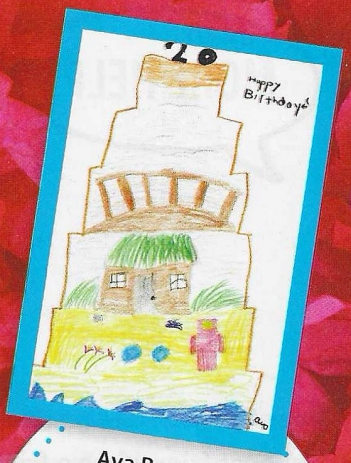
Help!

***American Girl* magazine**

8400 Fairway Place

Middleton, WI 53562

Our cover model, Madison, had lots of fun at our festive photo shoot!



Ava B., age 7, of Pennsylvania drew a cake for our contest—then she and her mom made the cake for her beach-themed birthday party.

Behind the Scenes

We love our readers—thanks for making the past 20 years so fun!

Ava and her sister, Sophia

Visit americangirl.com/playmagazine to see more cool cakes created by girls like you.

AG's Puzzle Page Answers:

Go to americangirl.com/playmagazine to send a sweet birthday e-card.

The pretty background on our cover is made of dozens and dozens of tissue-paper flowers.

We made **blue blooms,** too.

Photos: Steven Talley

ADVERTISEMENT

In Saige's stories, she uses her talent and creativity to inspire others. **Now it's your turn!**

Design your own hot air balloon and see it soar online with other balloons from across the country! Download our hot air balloon template at **americangirl.com/girloftheyear**.

Send us your design, and you'll be entered to win our **Grand Prize:** a Saige™ doll, her two-book set, and her hot air balloon!

SHINE ON NOW™

Plus, see how your school can win up to $10,000 for arts programs! Visit **americangirl.com/girloftheyear** for details.

AMERICANS for the ARTS

American Girl®

For full rules on the Soar with Saige Sweepstakes, visit **americangirl.com/girloftheyear**. NO PURCHASE OR PAYMENT OF ANY KIND IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. A PURCHASE WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. MANY WILL ENTER, FEW WILL WIN. Entry open to girls ages 8-13 years who are legal residents of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. Void in Puerto Rico, all US territories and possessions, and wherever prohibited by law. Sweepstakes will begin on January 1, 2013 and end on April 1, 2013. There will be a total of ten (10) winners selected at random. The winners will receive a Saige™ Doll & Paperback Book, *Saige Paints the Sky* paperback book, and Saige's Hot Air Balloon Set. Approximate retail value ("ARV") $266.96 per winner; Total ARV of $2,669.60. To enter, complete an official entry form and template of the 8 ½" x 11" Hot Air Balloon Artwork and mail to Girl of the Year 2013 - Soar with Saige Sweepstakes; P.O. Box 620497, Middleton, WI 53562-0497. Odds of winning depend upon the number of eligible entries received. Prizes won by minors will be awarded to parent or legal guardian. For a set of the complete Official Rules, send a self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to Girl of the Year® 2013 - Soar with Saige™ P.O. Box 620497, Middleton, WI 53562-0497. Requests must be received by 3/13/13. SPONSOR/PROMOTIONAL ENTITY: American Girl Brands, LLC, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562.

For full rules on the Elevate the Arts School Prize Package, visit **americangirl.com/girloftheyear**. NO PURCHASE OR PAYMENT OF ANY KIND IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. A PURCHASE WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. MANY WILL ENTER, FEW WILL WIN. Contest open to qualifying public, private, charter and home-school elementary schools with students ages 8-12 years located in the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. Void in Puerto Rico, all US territories and possessions, and wherever prohibited by law. Contest will begin on January 1, 2013 and end on May 31, 2013. There will be a total of thirteen (13) winning schools. All winning schools will receive a School Arts Grant to use for the Art program at Winner(s) schools. The First Place Winner will get a $10,000 grant and second and third place Winners will get $5,000 each. The ten (10) Runner Ups will get $2,500 each. Total ARV of all prizes is $40,000. Entrant MUST enter via the Girl of the Year® 2013 microsite at www.americangirl.com/girloftheyear. Entries need to include two separate components: a written essay and an artwork entry incorporating the theme of a hot air balloon. For a set of the complete Official Rules, send a self-addressed, stamped #10 envelope to Girl of the Year® 2013 - School Grant Contest P.O. Box 620497, Middleton, WI 53562-0497. Requests must be received by 5/13/13. SPONSOR/PROMOTIONAL ENTITY: American Girl Brands, LLC, 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton, WI 53562.

American Girl®

Coming up in the March/April issue of *American Girl* magazine

It's our all-animal issue!

Creative Creatures
Never-before-seen critters dreamed up by girls like you

Say, "Woof!"
Learn how to take perfect pictures of your pets.

Splash Zone
You'll have oceans of fun making clay sea animals.

Warm & Fuzzy
Animal posters you're sure to love

Illustrations: Carol Yoshizumi

For more fun and games, go to americangirl.com/playmagazine

Carefully peel your poster off of this tab.

Make a rainbow of wishes!

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Illustrations: Julia Denos

AG's Door Decor

Hang this on your bedroom doorknob and then color in your poster. Or turn the poster around for a rainbow of fun. Bring the party to your room!

American Girl®

Carefully cut along the dotted line to remove your door hanger.

American Girl®

Carefully cut out along dotted lines.

Night

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headband when you open your

American Girl®

Carefully cut out along dotted lines.

Early

Illustrations: Julia Bereciartu

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